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SUBJECT: UGANDAN GOVERNMENT DROPS CASE AGAINST GAY ACTIVISTS

REF: KAMPALA 01087

On August 15, the Ugandan Government dropped the criminal trespass case against Sexual Minorities of Uganda (SMUG) activists Pepe Julian Onziema, Valentine Kalende, and Usaam Mukwaya. The charges stem from an incident at the U.S.-sponsored PEPFAR Implementers' Conference in June. Poloff attended the hearing. The Directorate of Public Prosecutions requested that the case be dropped but did not offer any explanation for the move. Justice Olive Kazarwe subsequently dismissed the case. The defendants and gay activists present were pleased and somewhat surprised by the outcome. Lawyers for the defense called emboffs and speculated that Government may have been swayed by behind-the-scenes U.S. pressure with Ugandan officials and mounting international attention.

BROWNING